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At the Window

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illustrated by Qin Leng

When I walk down the street,
I see a house on the corner with
a big, wide window.

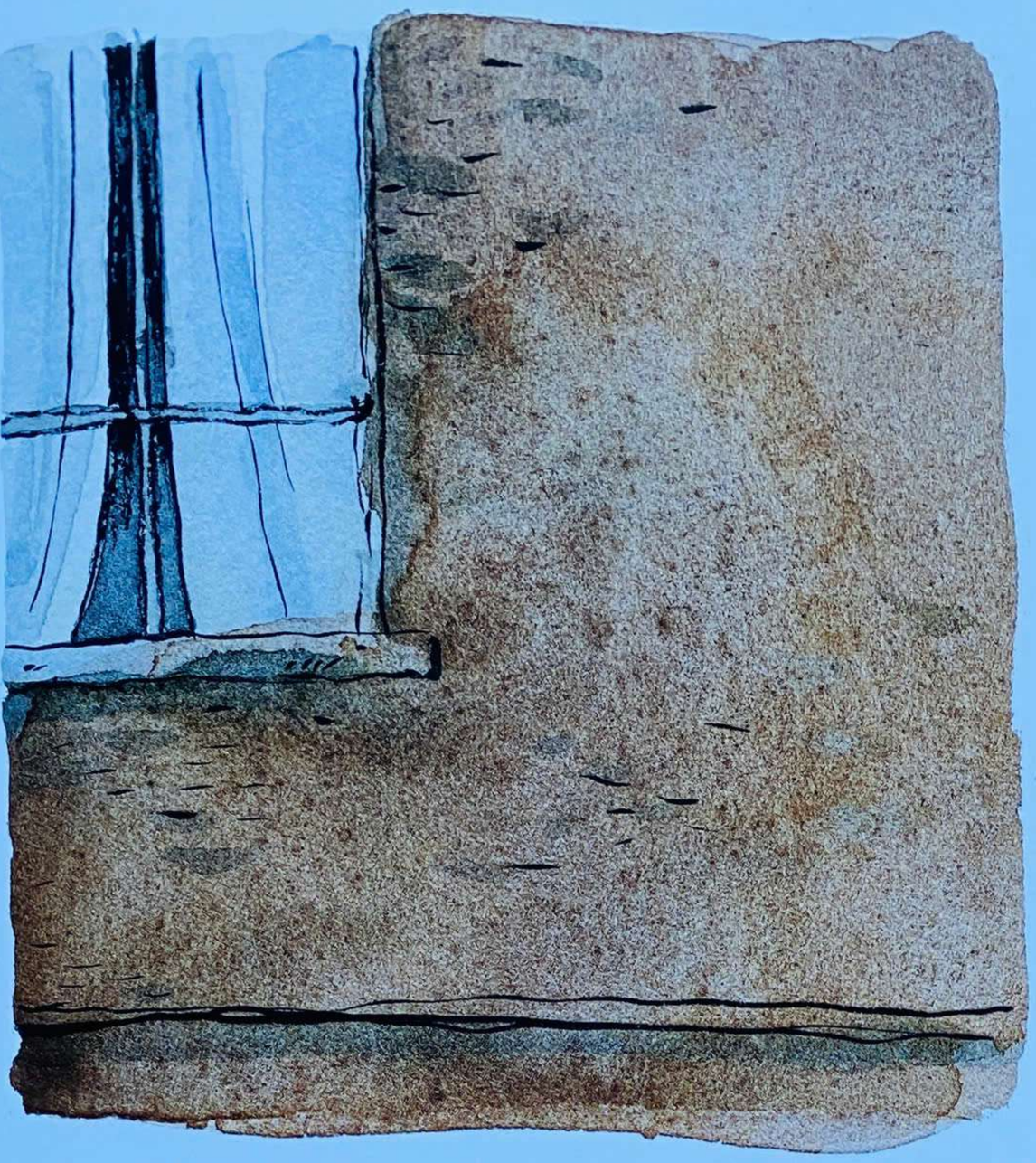
A woman sits there day in and day out. I wonder what she is doing

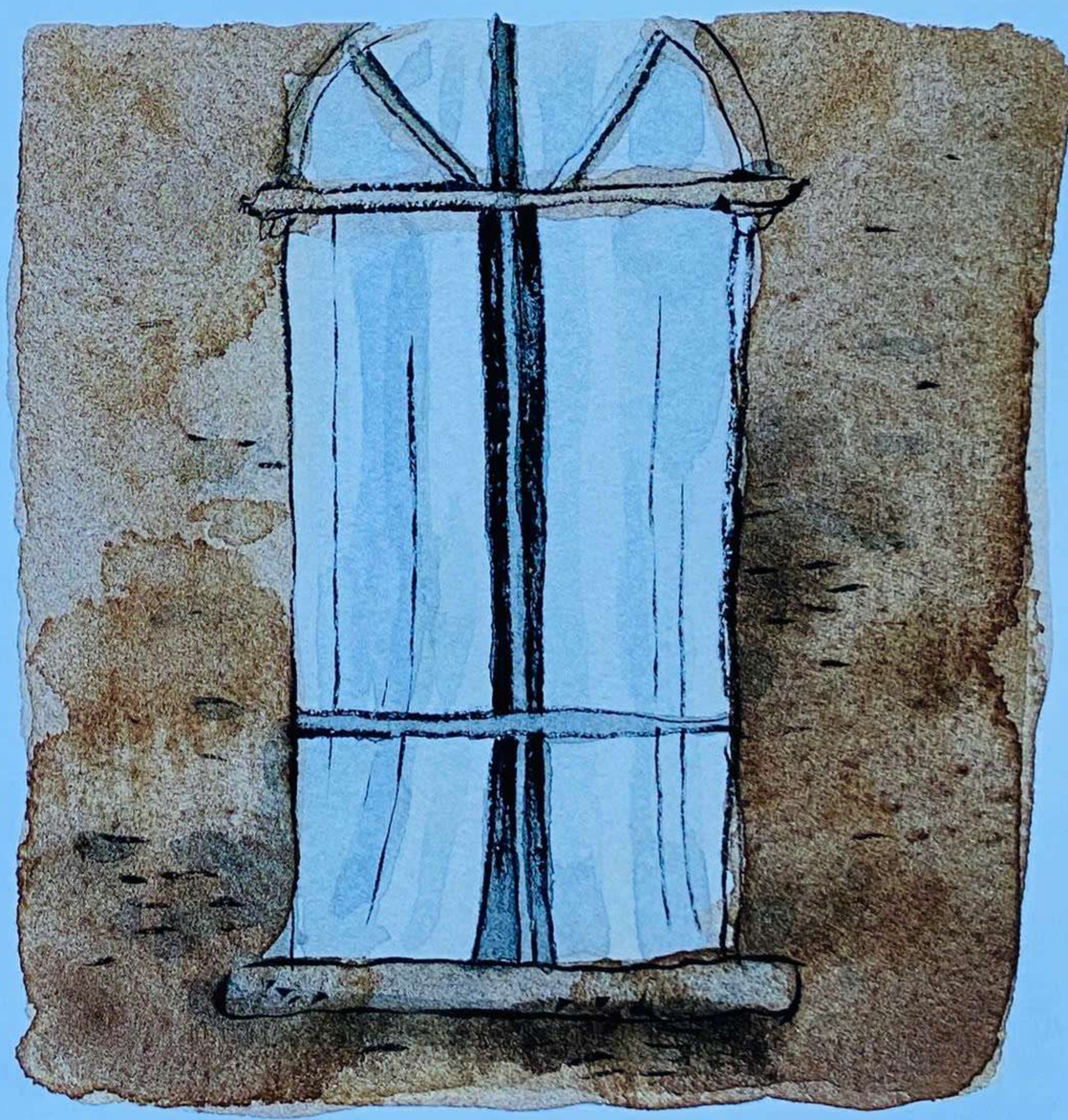
and why her window has no curtains at all.

Our windows are covered with curtains all the time.

One night, I go out with Daddy to walk my puppy.

In the dark, her window is as bright as the moon.





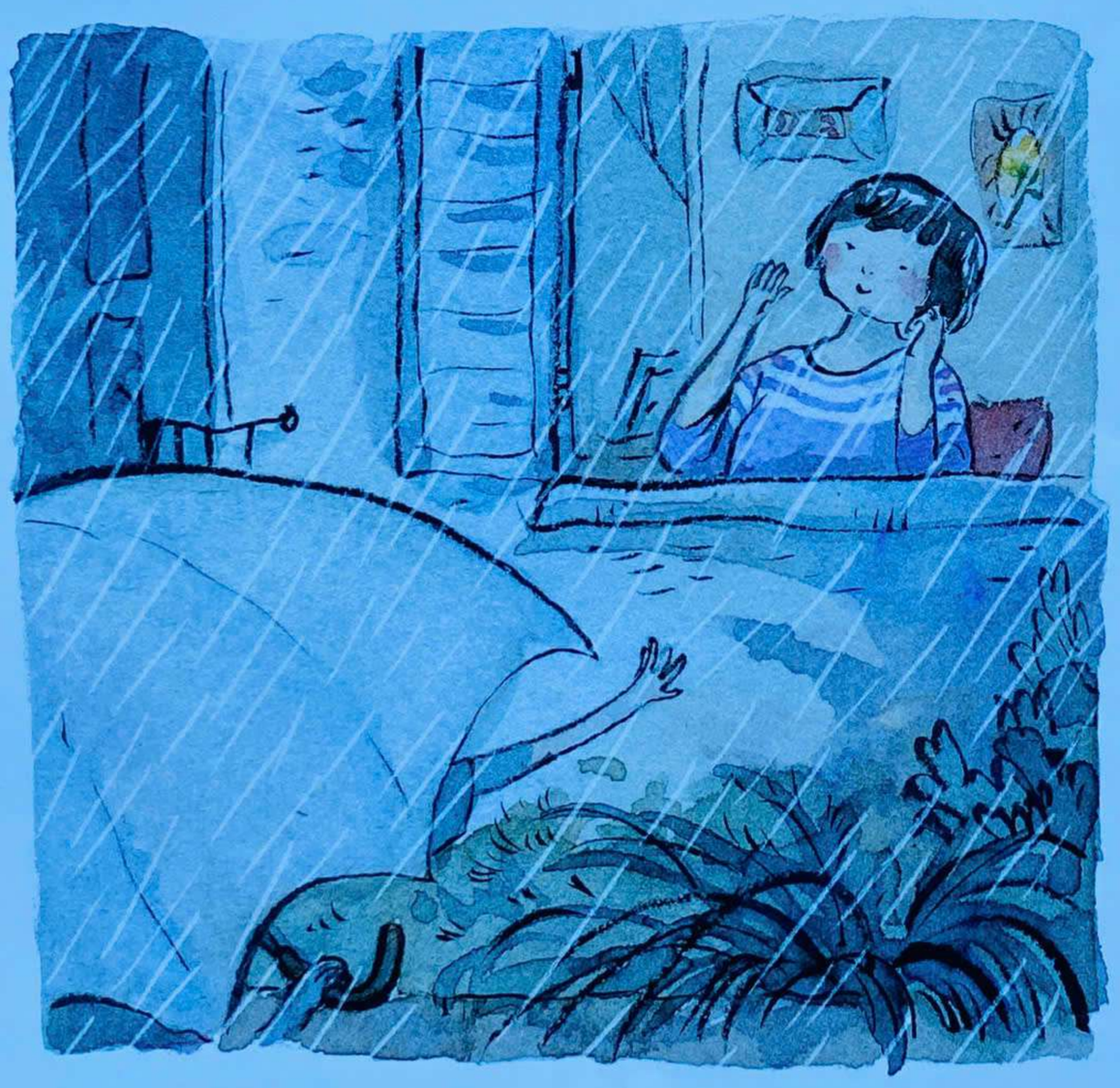
And through that window, her room is on display like a scene in a play.

The next day, I see her again.

This time, our eyes meet. Before I turn, she smiles a big smile.

I smile back and skip away.

After that day, we nod, wave, and smile whenever we see each other.



Often, we call out "Hello!" or "Have a nice day!"

She knows I walk by
with my puppy.

I know she is always
there at the window.

We chat when she leans out and asks, "What's his name?"

"Bear."

"What a big name for a small dog!"

I smile a big smile because that's what I have been saying, too.

"What are you doing?" I ask.

"Writing."

"Cool!"

Then one day when I skip down the street to see my neighbor,

she isn't there.

The next day. The same.

At night, her house isn't lit up. It's dark like the rest of the night sky.

The window looks lonely without her.

I walk by her house each day

and stop at the window with Bear.

Until I realize she has moved away.

Soon people stream in and out of her house.

I ask Mom if we can go in.

I see my neighbor's window from inside for the first time.

I am surprised by how much sun and light come through.
I stand where she used to sit and lean out.

From here I can see so many things I never noticed before. There's a sweeping view of our block from one end to the other and the wide, open sky above rooftops far beyond where I stop with Bear.

Now I know why she was watching and writing at her window.

When I get home, I draw our curtains and try to open the big window.

It's stubborn at first. But with Mom's help, I push it open,
and let the fresh air in.

Overgrown lilac branches have stretched above the windowsill.
A tree I used to climb has grown thick and tall, waiting for me to give it another try.

The windows across the street sparkle, reflecting the afternoon sun.
With the curtains open, now I see what I've been missing.

Down the street, I see her old house and smile.
I wonder if she is at her new window, watching . . .

and writing, like me.